

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 127624 TOSEC 020230

EXDIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE, INFO BANGKOK, JUNE 2, FROM
KUALA LUMPUR RPTD TO YOU:

QUOTE S E C R E T KUALA LUMPUR 3059

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM HABIB

FOR BANGKOK FOR ASST SECRETARY HABIB

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MY

SUBJ: HABIB VISIT TO MALAYSIA

1. AS WAS THE CASE IN CANBERRA, JAKARTA AND SINGAPORE,
MY VISIT TO MALAYSIA OCCASIONED A PERCEPTABLY WARMER HOST
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE THAN WOULD NORMALLY BE THE CASE.
PRIME MINISTER RAZAK SPENT AN HOUR AND A HALF WITH ME,
BRINGING IN SEVERAL OF HIS KEY MINISTERS FOR A PORTION OF
THE SESSION. IN ADDITION, HE LAID ON THE TOP SECURITY
AND ECONOMIC PEOPLE TO BRIEF AND EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH ME.
THERE IS NO DOUBT THE MALAYSIANS ARE PROBING TO SEE WHAT
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THE U.S. CAN AND WILL DO FOR THEM, IN THE WAKE OF INDOCHINA.
AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS EQUALLY CLEAR THEY DO NOT WISH TO
JEOPARDIZE THEIR NON-ALIGNED STATUS, OR PROVOKE HANOI.

2. ASSESSMENT OF THE SURROUNDING WORLD. I FOUND RAZAK'S ASSESSMENT OF HANOI'S INTENTIONS GENERALLY REALISTIC AND CONSISTENT WITH OUR OWN. HE IS HOPEFUL, HOWEVER, -- AND IN THIS HE IS ENCOURAGED BY SOME OF HIS ADVISERS -- THAT A POLICY OF AVOIDING CONFRONTATION AND GIVING OFFENSE TO HANOI WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING OTHER THAN A COLLISION COURSE WITH THE VIETNAMESE. IT IS, OF COURSE, NOT THE CONVENTIONAL THREAT WHICH CONCERNS THIS LEADERSHIP, BUT THE CAPABILITY THAT HANOI POSSESSES FOR SUPPORT OF SUBVERSION IN THE REGION. RAZAK MIGHT BE SLIGHTLY MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN WE ABOUT THE TIME FRAME IN WHICH HANOI COULD SCHEDULE TROUBLE-MAKING IN THE AREA. HE AND SOME OF HIS PEOPLE SUGGEST PERHAPS AS MUCH AS THREE YEARS OR MORE BEFORE TROUBLE STARTS.

3. REPEATEDLY HE EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR THE U.S. AND MALAYSIA TO REASSURE THE THAI OF OUR RESPECTIVE SUPPORT. ALONG WITH LEE AND THE INDONESIANS, RAZAK FINDS HIMSELF IN AGREEMENT THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT IS WEAK, AND HE IS NOT CERTAIN IT WILL SURVIVE ITS FORTHCOMING BUDGET TEST IN JULY. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE CONSIDERS THE THAI ARMY DETERMINED, AND BELIEVES THAT THE MILITARY, HOPEFULLY WORKING THROUGH CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES, COULD VERY WELL EMERGE AS THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. HE DOES NOT WANT TO SEE THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN THAILAND DESTROYED. GHAZALI SHAFIE, RAZAK'S HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER AND A KEY ADVISER, SUGGESTED THAT WE AND THE MALAYSIANS MUST ENCOURAGE THE THAI TO FOCUS ON THEIR SECURITY PRIORITIES. HE URGED US TO APPRECIATE THAT THE THAI ARE ENGAGED IN SOMETHING OF A SHADOW PLAY DICTATED BY DOMESTIC POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS AND WE SHOULD BE PATIENT WITH THEIR EXTRAVAGANT PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

4. RAZAK AND GHAZALI, COMMENTING ON THE PHILIPPINE SITUATION, SUGGESTED THE FILIPINOS ARE SEEKING TO IMPROVE THEIR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC IMAGE AS THEY JAB THE U.S. ON THE BASE ISSUE. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, THE MALAYSIANS CLAIM THEY HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME UNDERSTANDING
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THE GAME THE FILIPINOS ARE PLAYING.

5. AS FOR ASEAN, RAZAK INDICATED THE MALAYSIANS ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE DIRECTION ASEAN IS TAKING TOWARD SECURITY COOPERATION. THEY DO NOT WANT THE TERMS WRITTEN DOWN, HOWEVER, AGAIN BECAUSE THEY ARE MOST ANXIOUS TO AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF DEVELOPING A CONFRONTATION WITH HANOI. RAZAK WAS COOL TO AN ASEAN SUMMIT, ARGUING THAT IT WOULD NOT ENHANCE THE COOPERATION ALREADY IN PROGRESS, AND MIGHT CONVEY THE WRONG SIGNAL TO HANOI.

6. GOM RESPONSE TO INCREASED TERRORIST ACTIVITY WAS GOOD DURING 1974 WHEN SEVERAL PROBES DOWN THE PENINSULA WERE

ROLLED UP. IN LATTER PART OF 1974, HOWEVER, IN ATTACKS OF INFRA-STRUCTURE PROJECTS, AND IN SEVERAL AMBUSHES DURING FIRST HALF OF 1975, TERRORISTS FOR THE FIRST TIME WERE EQUIPPED WITH MODERN WEAPONS; M-16 RIFLES, M-79 GRENADE LAUNCHER, ARMOR PIERCING ROCKETS. GOM HAD ALREADY IN RESPONSE DECIDED TO BUY M-16 RIFLES AND HAD OPENED NEGOTIATIONS WITH COLT. IT IS ALSO IN PROCESS OF ACQUIRING OTHER WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT TO MEET IMPROVED TERRORIST WEAPONRY. ECONOMIC TURNDOWN, HOWEVER, COMBINED WITH TIGHT CASH FLOW POSITION, AND DEMANDS FROM THE SOCIAL SECTOR GENERATED BY FALLING RUBBER PRICES HAVE CREATED SEVERE BUDGET COMPETITION FOR THESE DEFENSE EXPENDITURES. VIETNAM COLLAPSE AND PROSPECT THAT THERE MAY BE A VASTLY INCREASED FLOW OF MODERN WEAPONS IN COMMUNIST TERRORIST HANDS HAS ADDED EXTRA ELEMENT OF URGENCY, AND THERE IS CLEAR HOPE THAT U.S. MAY BE IN A POSITION TO ASSIST MALAYSIA THROUGH THE SUPPLY OF MODERN MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

7. U.S. ASSISTANCE. RAZAK AND HIS ADVISERS WERE EAGER TO PROBE US ON WHAT THE U.S. COULD PROVIDE THE MALAYSIANS IN THEIR EFFORT TO DEAL WITH THE GROWING THREAT. RAZAK AND HIS SECURITY ADVISERS MADE IT CLEAR THEIR HIGHEST PRIORITY IS ACCESS TO EARLY ACQUISITION OF M-16 RIFLES, TO REPLACE THE GERMAN-MADE HK-33 WHICH THEY HAVE FOUND UNSATISFACTORY. SECONDLY, THEY WANT HELICOPTERS TO PROVIDE THEM WITH A QUICK REACTION CAPABILITY. THIRDLY, THEY WOULD LIKE TO EXPAND THEIR ARMORED CAR FORCE TO COUNTER THE INCREASING ACTIVITY OF THE TERRORISTS AGAINST COMMUNICATIONS LINES.

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OF SOMEWHAT LESSER PRIORITY IS THEIR INTEREST IN NAVAL PATROL CRAFT AND AN AIR RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY, BOTH OF WHICH RELATE DIRECTLY TO THEIR CONCERN AS TO WHAT MIGHT SOME DAY BE FLOATING ACROSS THE GULF OF SIAM FROM INDOCHINA. RAZAK ALSO MENTIONED HIS INTEREST IN U.S. TECHNOLOGY WHICH MAY BE RELEVANT TO JUNGLE WARFARE, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF U.S. COUNTER-INSURGENCY TRAINING. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO REQUEST HANDOUTS IN REGARD TO THE FOREGOING, BUT STATED HE HOPED "PURCHASE" ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE ON THE EASIEST TERMS POSSIBLE. I TOLD HIM THAT I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR US TO SEND AN EXPERT OR TWO TO TALK WITH HIS PEOPLE ABOUT THE TYPES OF EQUIPMENT, AND POSSIBLY TRAINING, WHICH WOULD BE MOST USEFUL TO MALAYSIA. HE AGREED THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL. I MADE NO COMMITMENTS BEYOND THIS, OTHER THAN PROMISING TO GIVE HIS REQUESTS VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION.

8. IN A SESSION WITH RAZAK'S TOP ECONOMIC ADVISERS, MALAYSIAN INTEREST IN U.S. CONCESSIONARY TYPE LOANS WAS ALSO EXPRESSEDMAFVVZCZ

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